

ANALYSIS

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

This fundamental question has been the subject of scholarly debate for centuries. Hundreds of books have been written on leadership. Not just what is leadership, but also what is the nature of it: is it an art or a science? Can it be taught or is it hereditary? Is leadership the same as supervision? Where does management fit in? Is leadership on the fireline different than leadership anywhere else? These and countless similar questions can end up swirling around in your brain as though you were the victim of bad medication. How do we end up making sense of it all?

First, we propose that we dispense with the notion that leadership is based solely on heredity. Leadership at its core involves dealing with people; we all accept that some people seem to be naturally better at this than others. However, there is ample evidence in both the private and public sectors that leadership traits can be identified and those traits developed in individuals who are willing to work and learn. Maybe the whole debate is moot, though. For wildland fire organizations, the bottom line is this: even if leadership were solely hereditary, just think what an orderly process of leadership development would do for the "born leaders". How much better would they be?

If we accept the basic tenet that good leaders can be "grown" or developed, then the next thing is to try to define just what leadership is, and what it is not. It is very easy to get bogged down in semantics in this type of endeavor. Perhaps the best approach will be to try to arrive at some agreed-upon "working definitions" that will allow us to move on.

The U.S. Army Field Manual 22-100, entitled "Army Leadership", contains a pretty good definition of leadership, one that would seem to apply to any type of organization.

“Leadership is influencing people—by providing purpose, direction and motivation—while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization.”

The Army Manual goes on for another five pages, explaining in detail what terms like "influencing" and "motivation" mean. For our purposes, the above definition can probably stand alone; it contains all the basic elements of what leadership is and what it aims to accomplish. Influencing, motivating, providing purpose and direction: all focused on getting the job done and at the same time improving the organization. What a tall order, no wonder it's a complex subject!

Let's take a stab at a working definition for supervision. **“Supervision involves the application of procedures and policies in directing employees to achieve an organization's immediate objective(s).”** Obviously it is similar enough to leadership in some ways: it involves directing employees (influencing people) to achieve objectives (accomplish the mission). However, there is more of an emphasis on procedures and policies and on achieving short-term goals (immediate objectives) than what's embodied in our definition of leadership. Leadership involves providing purpose, direction and motivation, and the goal is not just to accomplish immediate objectives but also to improve the organization. These may seem to be subtle distinctions, and in the final

analysis one could conclude that supervision is simply a skill set under the broader umbrella of "leadership".

Management is a little easier to separate from the other terms. **“Management involves the coordination of fiscal resources, logistical resources, and human resources to achieve an organization's long-term goals.”** Not much in here about directing or motivating employees, is there?

Given the above definitions, it's fairly easy to define what leadership is not. It is not a technical, cognitive subject that can be studied, disassembled and reassembled like an internal combustion engine. It deals with human behavior and communication, subjects that are at times as impenetrable as dog-hair lodgepole pine. The study of leadership has more in common with the fields of behavioral science and psychology than it does with fire behavior and meteorology. We're typically comfortable when dealing with the science of fighting fire, but when it comes to the study of people fighting fire we're suddenly off balance. There's no belt weather kit for measuring human behavior.

Is leadership on the fireline different than leadership anywhere else? In some ways, perhaps it isn't very different. Many leadership concepts and practices are universal. The skill set required for "influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation" may be pretty similar for running a hotshot crew or an advertising sales force. It's the environments that people operate in that differ, and this has many subtle impacts on the exercise of leadership. For example, both the hotshot crew and the sales force operate under stress and there can be adverse consequences for all involved if poor leadership is exercised and poor decisions are made. However, the hotshot crew is under a great deal of physical stress as well as mental stress; they typically operate under high levels of fatigue. The hotshot crew lives together 24 hours a day when on fire assignments, something most sales forces aren't required to do. This adds additional unique stresses and leadership challenges. When the hotshot crew superintendent makes a decision on the fireline, chances are he or she doesn't have a great deal of time to analyze all of the possible outcomes of that decision. Finally, the consequences of poor leadership and decision making on a hotshot crew can lead to its members being killed or injured, while on the sales force maybe the worst that can happen is that someone doesn't sell enough and loses their job.

In other words, many leadership principles and techniques apply everywhere—in the military, in civilian government and in the corporate world. It's the application of those leadership principles and techniques that differs based on the environment in which leadership is exercised. That's what makes leadership in wildland fire different from any other type of leadership.

CURRENT SITUATION

Fundamental Flaws in the Current Curriculum

The following specific problems were identified with wildland fire leadership training as it exists today:

1. Nothing is presented at the entry level (firefighters, personnel time recorders, etc.)
2. Courses currently billed as "leadership courses" cover a lot of other content such as supervision, management, ethics and conduct, EEO. Much of this content is presented in other agency-required sessions (e.g., ethics and conduct, EEO/sexual harassment), so it is redundant, plus it is not directly related to leadership.
3. There is no distinct articulation of the separation/differences between leadership, supervision and management.
4. Courses currently deliver content to students but they do not get opportunities to put concepts into practice. This is not effective learning for adults.
5. Leadership courses are not required for any positions in the 310-1.
6. There is no leadership model or group of concepts taught that are continuously linked from lower to higher levels in the curriculum.
7. There is no assessment of leadership capabilities or skills development; no way to measure if objectives have been met.
8. There is no method of providing or acquiring continuing education opportunities with regard to leadership.
9. Delivery of training is poorly timed: currently, the concepts covered in S-201 and 301 are delivered far too late in people's careers. Many of these are basic concepts that people should be getting earlier.

NWCG Leadership Training Courses

S-201 and S-301 Discussion

Since these courses are the currently identified ones in the NWCG training curriculum that purport to contain leadership content, we examined them thoroughly. Our examination not only focused on whether or not the courses contained information specific to leadership issues, we also looked at whether the material presented was appropriate to the level of qualifications of the people who would normally take the course.

Detailed analyses of each course are presented below. To summarize these, what we found was that the courses contain a mixture of leadership content and management

content, and that the leadership content in each course varies from "high level" to "low level" concepts. For example, S-301 contains information covering followership skills. By the time a person is far enough along in their wildland fire career to be taking 300-level courses, they should already be familiar with followership skills and concepts.

The two courses appear to be independent products; in other words, 301 does not effectively build upon the content presented in 201. Further, there is a great deal of content in both S-201 and S-301 that appears to be redundant with agency-required "first 40" supervisory training. Topics such as delegation and the use of objectives in evaluating performance are routinely covered in agency-required supervisory training. Our feeling is that this redundancy is wasteful and that the Training Working Team needs to decide whether any supervisory or managerial content is appropriate within the NWCG training curriculum, and if it is, at what level. Further, many agencies require annual training on topics such as EEO, Civil Rights, sexual harassment—why duplicate this training in the NWCG curriculum?

Finally, neither of these courses is officially required in order to become qualified for any ICS position. This means that a person can advance to high levels of ICS qualifications without ever having taken them or received much of anything in the way of leadership training. We feel this is a problem, given the leadership issues that continue to be identified in accident reports and safety studies.

The analyses below examine unit objectives for leadership content and applicability. They also compare the content in the NWCG courses with the following recently developed leadership courses: Human Factors (HF), Followership to Leadership (F2L), and Fireline Leadership (FL). The Human Factors course was developed under the auspices of NWCG's Safety and Health Working Team; the Followership to Leadership course was developed as part of the SAFE Initiative; Fireline Leadership was developed under the auspices of the U.S. Forest Service.

S-201 Analysis and Content Comparison

HF	=	Human Factors course
F2L	=	Followership to Leadership course
FL	=	Fireline Leadership course

Unit 0—Introduction

1. Introduce the trainees to the instructors, peers, and purpose of the course.
2. Identify trainee expectations and concerns.
3. Identify the course format, unit topics, course agenda and use of the student workbook.
4. Identify trainee performance level and course completion requirements.

Analysis:

- Not applicable, standard introduction process that is not specific to any content issues.

Unit 1–Supervisor Responsibilities

- Define a supervisors role, legal responsibilities, relationship with subordinates, and benefits of being a supervisor.

Analysis:

- Roles and relationships are leadership issues.
 - *F2L Course covers roles in the context of leadership values and principles and recognizing leadership misconceptions (1 hour).*
 - *FL Course covers roles and relationship in the context of levels of leadership, the leadership environment, leadership values and principles (4 hours).*
- Legal responsibilities are an agency and position specific topic.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (First 40 Supervision training?).*
- Benefits of supervision is a leadership issue.
 - *F2L Course covers leader motivation in the context of self-analysis of why individuals want to fill leadership roles (½ hour).*

Unit 2–Ethics

1. Define ethics and describe their relevance to the role of the supervisor.
2. Identify criteria to determine if a decision is ethical.
3. Given a questionable ethical situation, identify information sources available to supervisors for consultation.

Analysis:

- Ethical behavior and ethical decisions are leadership issues.
 - *FL Course covers ethics in the context of professional ethics, ethical dilemmas, and ethical decision making (2 hours).*
- Ethics information sources is a duplication of annual required agency training.

Unit 3–Workforce Diversity

1. Define workforce diversity, civil rights, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity.
2. Describe the supervisor's role in recognizing, supporting and utilizing a diverse workforce.

Analysis:

- Entire unit is duplication of annual required agency training.

Unit 4–Mutual Respect

1. Define mutual respect, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate behavior.
2. Identify the supervisor's role in dealing with sexual harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate behavior.

Analysis:

- Entire unit is duplication of annual required agency training.

Unit 5–Critical Incident Stress

1. Define a critical incident.
2. Identify the behaviors associated with a critical incident.
3. Describe a supervisor's responsibility to someone who has experienced a critical incident.

Analysis:

- Critical incidents, fear, and stress are leadership issues.
 - *HF Course covers stress in the context of individual self-awareness of stress reactions (1 hour).*
 - *FL Course covers stress in the context of recognition of human error, fear, and stress in order to mitigate their effects for subordinates (2 hours).*
- Critical incident stress requirements are an agency specific topic.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (CISD training?).*

Unit 6–Communication

1. Identify and describe the essential elements of communication.
2. Demonstrate the ability to receive and present oral and written information.
3. Describe the importance of providing feedback to oral and written information.

Analysis:

- Entire unit consists of follower level skills.
 - *HF Course covers situation awareness and communication at this level (1 ½ hours).*

Unit 7–Leadership

1. Define goals, objectives, and tasks.
2. Describe the planning, assigning, controlling, and evaluating (PACE) system.
3. Describe four leadership styles.
4. Describe appropriate supervisory appraisal, delegation, documentation, motivation, and evaluation procedures.
5. Describe effective decision making.
6. Describe methods to solve problems and differentiate between conduct and performance problems.

Analysis:

- Objectives #1 and #2 consist of basic supervision skills.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (First 40 Supervision training?).*
- Objective #3 is a leadership issue.
 - *F2L Course covers leadership styles in the context of basic situational leadership problems (1 ½ hours).*
 - *FL Course covers leadership styles in the context of advance situational leadership scenario analysis, sources of power, and follower challenge groups (4 hours).*
- Objective #4 consists of basic supervision skills (except motivation).
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (First 40 Supervision training?).*
 - *FL Course covers motivation in the context of it being the primary component of a leadership vision (1 hour).*
- Objective #5 is a leadership issue.
 - *HF Course covers decision making in the context of basic decision process awareness (1 hour).*

- *F2L Course covers decision making in the context of understanding the dynamics of making decisions in a group setting (2 hours).*
- *FL Course covers decision making in the context of simulation exercises with stress inputs (8 hours).*
- Objective #6 is a leadership issue.
 - *F2L Course covers follower problem solving in the context of typical "what-if" scenarios for new leaders (1 hour).*
 - *FL Course covers follower problem solving in the context of enforcing standards, counseling, and resolving conflict (8 hours).*

Unit 8–Teambuilding

1. Define a team.
2. Describe advantages and disadvantages of teams.
3. Describe methods for building teams.

Analysis:

- Objective #1 and #2 consist of follower level knowledge.
 - *HF Course covers teams in the context of teamwork guidelines (½ hour).*
- Objective #3 is a leadership issue.
 - *F2L Course covers teams in the context of comparing team decisions to individual decisions (½ hour).*
 - *FL Course covers teams in the context of team building methods and training plans (4 hours).*

S-301 Analysis and Content Comparison

Unit 0–Introduction

1. Course objective
2. Cadre/trainees
3. Course development history
4. Agenda
5. Performance expectations
6. Course learning contract

Analysis:

- Not applicable, standard introduction process that is not specific to any content issues.

Unit 1–Communication

1. Describe the communication methods used by the average supervisor.
2. Identify what a supervisor's communication goals should be.
3. Describe the basic process of human communication.
4. Identify the conditions necessary for accurate and effective communication.
5. Differentiate between hearing and listening.

Analysis:

- Entire unit consists of follower level skills and is a duplication of communication units found in other S-courses.
 - *HF Course covers basic communication processes (1 ½ hours).*
 - *FL Course covers active listening (2 hours).*

Unit 2–Leadership

1. Describe and identify five leadership styles base on Blake & Mouton's Managerial Grid.
2. Describe the general characteristics of managers based on six criteria.
3. Categorize your management styles through self examination.
4. Describe how the general characteristics of managers impact the thirteen areas of management's concern.
5. Describe the characteristics of Team 9.9 Manager.
6. Define the four development levels of followers and how they may affect your leadership style.
7. Describe the impact of time and stress on leadership styles and the incident setting.

Analysis:

- Objectives #1-5 involve the use of a tool that has a "management" focus. It is a self-assessment of personality traits and should be presented only by people trained in its proper delivery. The content also shows a bias towards one preferred "style" which conflicts with the concept of situational leadership.
- Objective #6 is a partial presentation of situational leadership concepts.
- Objective #7 is a leadership issue.
 - *HF, F2L, and FL Courses all address stress and stress management in high risk work environments (6 hours).*

Unit 3–Delegation

1. Define delegation.
2. Identify the benefits derived from effective delegation.
3. Identify the barriers which prevent effective delegation.
4. Describe the nine principles of effective delegation.
5. Describe the consequences of reverse delegation.

Analysis:

- Entire unit consists of basic supervision skills.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (First 40 Supervision training?).*
 - *FL Course simulation exercises require the use of delegation skills for trainees to be successful.*

Unit 4–Conflict Resolution

1. Identify four types of conflict that can occur at an incident.
2. Identify the five basic styles of conflict resolution.
3. Cite four guiding principles in effective conflict resolution.
4. Explain suggested steps in conflict resolution.
5. Given a sample conflict, the trainee will apply steps most likely to lead to a satisfactory solution.

Analysis:

- This unit is a leadership issue.
 - *FL Course covers conflict resolution using role-play exercises but does not go into the background content of how and why conflicts develop.*

Unit 5–Civil Rights

1. Identify the importance of federal, state, and local laws and agency policies dealing sexual harassment, equal employment, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and workforce diversity.
2. Describe a workplace free of inappropriate behavior.
3. Describe steps to correct and prevent inappropriate behavior.
4. Describe relationships between supervisor and the incident Human Resource Specialist.
5. Describe the importance of documentation and preserving confidentiality.
6. Define workforce diversity and its implications in incident management.
7. Define adequate facilities related to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
8. Describe the incident supervisor's role to ensure contractors compliance of ADA.

Analysis:

- Objectives #1-6 are a duplication of annual agency required training.
- Objectives #7-8 are specific incident facility management issues.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (S-354?).*

Unit 6–Objectives, Performance Evaluations, Monitoring

1. Discuss the use of objectives in evaluating performance.
2. Analyze and discuss the parts of an objective.
3. Describe how objectives can be used to evaluate performance.
4. Discuss why it is important for supervisors to evaluate performance.
5. Discuss two primary systems for evaluating individual performance under NIIMS and describe the relationship between the two.
6. Describe the common monitoring techniques for us in evaluating the performance of others.
7. Discuss the considerations for the final closeout evaluation.

Analysis:

- Objectives #1-4 and #6-7 are basic supervision skills.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (First 40 Supervision training?).*
- Objectives #5 is a fire specific supervisory administration issue.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (I-200?).*

Unit 7–Internal and External Controls

1. Describe why effective internal controls are to be developed and maintained in your incident organization to ensure the integrity of: health and safety, property accountability, fiscal responsibility, and organizational requirements.
2. List and discuss the standard/normal internal controls used at incidents.
3. Describe external controls that may affect your incident organization.

Analysis:

- Entire unit consists of basic management issues in an incident setting.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (I-200?).*

Unit 8--Time Management

1. Describe the impact of internal/external influences and time choices.
2. Describe the four parts of the Management Cycle.
3. Describe how the Management Cycle and the section Planning Cycle guides work together.
4. Describe five time management strategies that can be applied to incident operations as well as day-to-day work activities.

Analysis:

- Objective #1, #2, and #4 are basic supervision knowledge or skills.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (First 40 Supervision training?).*
- Objective #3 is a fire specific IMT level planning issue.
 - *Needs to be covered, but not a leadership issue (I-300?)*

Unit 9--Technology Management

1. Discuss why it is important as a supervisor to know what technologies are available for implementation in incident management.
2. List current technologies relevant to your supervisory role.
3. Discuss the various sources available that enable supervisors to keep current on technological advances.
4. Describe the role of the supervisor in inter-functional and intra-functional information and technology exchange.

Analysis:

- Entire unit addresses technical skill issues.
 - Relevant S-courses usually address current technology applications.

SUMMARY OF NON-LEADERSHIP TOPICS COVERED IN S-201/301

Supervisory Topics

Legal Responsibilities	
Diversity (Civil Rights, EEO, AA, ADA)	201/301
Dealing with harassment	201/301
CISD resources	201
Planning Skills	201
PACE system	301
Management cycle	301
Time management strategies	
Directing Skills	
Defining tasks with objectives	201/301
Delegation	201/301
Performance appraisals	201/301
Documentation	201

ICS Topics

NIIMS evaluation system	301
Incident Planning Cycle	301
Internal/external controls at incidents	301
Current technology application at incidents	301

S-420, S-520 and S-620

These courses are targeted for the Command/General Staff at the Type 2 or Type 1 level, and for Area Command, respectively. Working as a team and team building are strongly emphasized, and simulations are used extensively. Leadership concepts are discussed, especially those that relate to communication. S-520 is widely recognized as a "weed out" course that screens participants rigorously before allowing them to move up to the Type 1 level. Traditionally, S-420 has not screened participants nearly as rigorously as S-520; passing 420 is not seen as being very difficult, while passing 520 is. The fact that many people who pass S-420 and perform on Type 2 teams fail S-520 would seem to support this. In the current curriculum and 310-1, it is possible to reach the Type 2 incident command level without ever having taken any leadership courses. It is fairly easy to make the case that this is far too late in a person's career to get the first exposure to leadership principles and practices. All members of Command/General staffs need to exercise leadership in their jobs on incidents, and they should be well grounded in leadership theories and practices long before arriving at the Type 2 level of incident management.

Although the "S-" designation denotes a "suppression skills" course, it could be argued that none of these courses fits into that category very neatly. In fact, these courses seem to suffer from an identity crisis: are they primarily learning experiences for the students or are they evaluation (screen out) opportunities for cadres made up mainly of existing practitioners at the Type 2, Type 1 and Area Command levels? Do they measure what people learn at the course or do they measure people's competency levels at things they already know? If we need to evaluate people (or teams) in a "hot seat" situation, why not admit that's the primary purpose of the event and forget about calling it "training"? Sure, people learn plenty while in the "hot seat", but the fact is that to be successful at S-520 you have to bring a lot of already developed competencies with you when you arrive for the course.

The leadership development process that we propose will complement the Command/General Staff and Area Command courses by helping people develop as leaders well before they arrive at the Section Chief or Officer level in the Incident Command System. In the future, it may be recognized that some of the leadership content in S-420, 520 and 620 will have already been covered in the leadership curriculum, allowing these courses to focus more exclusively on evaluating incident command skills and abilities in a team environment.

Review of Other Existing Courses for Leadership Content

A review of course and unit objectives for existing courses in the NWCG curriculum shows no clear pattern in terms of integrating leadership content into courses targeted at specific positions. For example, there is no information on follower responsibilities in S-130. Another example, and one that surprised us, is that there is no discernable leadership content in S-230, the course targeted at the Crew Boss position. Here is a course for a position that will be responsible for 19 firefighters on the fireline, yet it contains nothing related to leadership. Further, no courses that do focus on leadership are required to become a qualified Crew Boss.

The table below illustrates the leadership content in existing courses:

Course Number	Leadership content?	Unit Number	Related Objective
S-130	No		
S-131	Yes	Unit 3: Communication	Obj. 1: Define communication and list ways to ensure that complete and accurate commo takes place. Obj. 4: Identify the commo responsibility of the Squad Boss during a tactical assignment.
S-200	No		
S-205	No		
S-211	No		
S-212	No		
S-216	No		
S-217	No		
S-230	No		
S-231, 232, 233, 234	No		
S-260	Yes	Unit 1: Rules of Conduct	Obj. 1: Describe the rules of conduct and prohibited conduct.
S-290	No		
S-300	Yes	Unit 4: Operations	Obj. 2: Describe Incident Commander actions that may be utilized to direct and maintain control of incident personnel.
S-336	No		
S-371	Yes	Unit 1: Common Responsibilities	Obj. 1: Identify the responsibilities of the helibase manager necessary to promote positive interpersonal and interagency working relationships.
S-378	No		

Course Number	Leadership content?	Unit Number	Related Objective
S-420	Yes	Unit 1: Personnel Mgmt., Firefighter Safety and Fire Dynamics Unit 2: Team Building	Unit 1, Obj. 1: Describe team responsibilities regarding current issued for management of personnel safety and welfare in fire suppression. Unit 2: All eight objectives are related to communication and/or leadership.
S-430	Yes	Unit 2: Supervision	Obj. 2: Describe how to manage the Operation's organization in terms of communication and delegation.

All of the courses above are part of an existing content revision cycle. We recommend that during the revision cycle, each course be examined closely to determine if leadership content is appropriate within the context of that course. Establishing a separate leadership curriculum will not eliminate the need to focus on position-specific leadership considerations within courses for positions like Crew Boss.

NARTC Courses with Leadership Components

Fire Program Management

This course is primarily a management skills course that is targeted at aspiring Fire Management Officers. It is interagency in nature; the National Park Service requires it for all of their Fire Management Officers, while the course is recommended by other federal agencies for their FMO's. Content includes sections on budget management, litigation, ecology, WFSAs, etc.

In 1993 a steering committee was established by the NWCG Training Working Team to conduct task analyses and develop a Fire Program Management course. The course is currently in a state of transition. Traditionally, this course has been a 72-hour classroom course. Unlike many NARTC courses, this course was designed to be delivered in geographic areas (it is seldom delivered at NARTC). There is currently a contract with a private vendor to put a great deal (approximately two thirds) of the course content into an online format so that it can be accessed via the Internet. The remaining one third of the course would remain classroom-based.

Although much of the course is management skills oriented, there is a 1.5 hour block that deals directly with leadership issues. This part of the course was initially developed by Paul Gleason as an outgrowth of the South Canyon Fire. Content includes discussions of recognition primed decision making, respectful listening and leadership styles.

Fire Management Leadership

This 3-day course is targeted at agency administrators at the Forest Supervisor/Deputy Forest Supervisor (USFS), Superintendent (NPS, BIA) and Field Office or Resource Manager (BLM, USFWS) level. Course objectives are:

- Improve agency administrator's ability to provide leadership in fire management and other emergency activities to better recognize when they and the public are being well served.
- Gain a common understanding of national policy, agency administrators responsibility and accountability, and agency administrator authority to improve all fire management actions.

Most of the content of this course is management process related. For example, discussion of policy is extensive, including the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. Other topics include the agency administrator's briefing, Wildland Fire Situation Analysis, Risk and Cost Analysis. Agency administrator authority and responsibility are covered in depth.

Participants in this course are already in leadership roles in their organizations, but may or may not have any background in fire. Since it is assumed that participants are already functioning leaders, teaching leadership principles is not emphasized. Internal and external relations and interagency cooperation are discussed, as well as the agency administrator's role in fire management.

Fire Management Leadership for Agency Executives

This is an 8-hour course for senior agency managers (e.g., State Directors, Regional Foresters). Its focus is primarily on policy and the ramifications of policy implementation to agencies and the public. While the word "leadership" is in the title of this course, leadership concepts are not taught. Cooperation and accountability are repeated themes. This event is actually not a training course per se, but rather a series of guest lectures and panel presentations.

NWCG 310-1

Review of 310-1 for Existing Leadership Courses and Positions Covered

The January 2000 version of the 310-1 is confusing in its references to leadership courses. Some of the courses are referenced under the "old" numbering system (e.g., S-201, 301, 401) while in other parts of the same document they are referenced under the "new" numbering system (e.g., S- 281, 381, 481). For the purposes of this analysis, we refer to course numbers as they currently exist (201 and 301), while recognizing that S-401 has never existed. The revision of S-201 and S-301 were put on hold pending the outcome of this analysis process.

Forest Service Manual 5109.17 mandates completion of S-201 and S-301 for Forest Service employees for many ICS positions. Other agencies follow the 310-1 and these courses are designated as "additional training" which is not required for their employees. In most agencies, it would be possible to reach the Command/General Staff level on an Incident Management Team without having taken any training specific to leadership principles and techniques.

S-420 and S-520 are required courses, however as noted above these courses exist more to evaluate leadership competencies than to teach leadership concepts.

SECTION	POSITION	REQUIRED TRAINING	ADDITIONAL TRAINING . . .	COURSE NUMBER
Command	ICT2		X	S-401
	SOF2		X	S-401
	IOF2		X	S-301
	IOF2		X	S-401
	RXB2		X	S-301
Operations	OSC2		X	S-401
	STCR/ STEN/ STDZ/ STPL		X	S-301
	STAM		X	S-201
	FFT1		X	S-201
Air Operations	AOBD		X	S-401
	HEB2		X	S-301
	HEMG		X	S-201
Planning	RESL		X	S-301
	TNSP		X	S-301
Logistics	All Unit Leader Positions		X	S-301

SECTION	POSITION	REQUIRED TRAINING	ADDITIONAL TRAINING . . .	COURSE NUMBER
	INCM ORDM RCDM SECM BCMG EQPM		X	S-201
Finance	TIME		X	S-301
	COST		X	S-301
	COMP		X	S-301
	PROC		X	S-301
Expanded Dispatch	EDSP		X	S-301
	EDSD		X	S-201

It should be apparent from the above review that current leadership training courses are not constructed in a "building block" approach where courses build on knowledge previously acquired. Even if the curriculum was constructed this way, many positions would not take advantage of such an approach under the current 310-1-- even if all the currently recommended training was mandatory! For example, the Logistics Section Unit Leader positions have S-301 as "additional training". If a person starts their leadership training at an intermediate level, when do they ever get the basics?

BENCHMARKING OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS' APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Military Organizations

Military Leadership Versus Leadership in Wildland Fire

The U.S. Marine Corps feels pretty strongly about leadership, for obvious reasons. Leadership and its development are ingrained into most things a Marine does. For example, Marines make the statement "if there are two Marines walking down the street, one of them is the leader" even if they're the same rank (something akin to our "chief of party" concept). Throughout many decades of history and many intense battles, the Marines have come up with some distinct ideas about what makes a person a leader and what makes a leader poor, adequate, good, or great. No quibbling here about whether or not leadership is inherited or learned: the Marines spend weeks and weeks focusing on leadership development at all levels of their organization, both in the NCO and officer ranks. It seems to be a widely held belief in the military that leaders must be developed; it cannot be left to chance.

Are there enough parallels between what the Marines do and what wildland firefighters do for us to make valid comparisons and draw conclusions for our own leadership development? Some of the similarities are obvious. For example, military organizations and wildland firefighters both operate in a high risk work environment where poor leadership decisions can result in increased threat to life and property. Some similarities may be more subtle: both firefighting and military leadership processes tend to be very "mission-focused" and time-compressed, especially at the lower organizational levels, as opposed to the more "consensus-oriented" approach often used in the private sector. Another similarity is that "rank and file" personnel in both military and wildland fire organizations can easily distinguish good leadership from bad. The cultures of military and firefighting organizations are very similar in that subordinates do not suffer poor leadership gladly: the personal consequences to followers are just too costly.

Another similarity between firefighting organizations and military organizations is that because of the dynamic situations that are the norm on fires or battlefields, people at any level of the organization can suddenly find themselves "in charge". For example, crews are frequently split physically on fires; in this situation, a squad boss can easily be in a position to make life-or-death decisions that affect many other people. This is the compelling reason that has made the military institutionalize leadership development at all levels of the organization, rather than just concentrate on the top echelon. It is the reason that the wildland fire community needs to do the same.

There are also some key differences between leadership in military organizations and leadership in wildland firefighting. One significant difference is that military organizations readily accept that there will be times when even good decision making results in the deaths of some of their own personnel. In wildland firefighting organizations the basic precept is that no losses are acceptable under any circumstances. While this may influence the types of decisions made in many cases, it does not alter the principles and traits of a good leader. Which brings us to another difference between leadership in military and wildland fire organizations: military organizations all have written sets of leadership principles and traits, while wildland firefighting organizations do not. In the Army, these leadership principles and traits are printed on a plastic holder for each soldier's dog tags.

Another key difference between military and wildland fire organizations is that wildland fire personnel are empowered to refuse direct orders. We tell our people that they have the right to "say no" to assignments that they deem unsafe. In the military, such an action would most likely lead to a court martial. Thus, while firefighting operations are not by nature "democracies", they are a shade more toward the democratic end of the spectrum than military operations. In wildland fire organizations, even in the "heat of battle", leaders may have to explain and justify decisions to subordinates. In the military, this is seldom a requirement or even an expectation. In the military, leaders are judged on whether they accomplished the mission or not, and on how well it was accomplished. In wildland fire, leaders are judged first on how safe the operations were, and second on whether incident objectives were met or not.

In summary, military organizations and wildland fire organizations are not identical, but they do share a number of key similarities. The numbers and types of similarities are

such that it seems appropriate to look at how military organizations deal with leadership issues, to glean some ideas for our own organizations. There is no desire to mimic what the military does, rather the intent is to borrow the best and most applicable ideas from the military in the process of crafting our own unique approach to leadership development in wildland fire.

Establishing Leadership Principles

Without common definitions and agreed-upon principles for leadership, how can people learn what to focus on in their own development or the development of their subordinates? For example, if "decisiveness" is a leadership trait that the organization values, it constitutes a defined set of behaviors that can be studied and practiced. Further, if "seek responsibility" is a valued leadership principle, employees can use that as a guide in making decisions on a daily basis.

Leadership may be many things to many people, but without some type of road map the only good leaders that our organizations will have will be ones who have found a workable formula through trial and error. Obviously our organizations do have some good leaders, the question is are there enough of them? The military has some poor leaders, even with its emphasis on leadership development. The question is, how many more poor leaders (or how many fewer good leaders) would the military have without such emphasis?

Leadership gurus in the private sector, such as Steven Covey, promote "principle-centered leadership". All branches of the U.S. military have defined leadership "traits" and "principles". While the terminology may vary from one organization to another, many of the concepts appear to be fairly universal. Military organizations worldwide supply their leaders with a list of the leadership traits and principles that are valued by the organization. The wildland fire community owes its leaders no less. (See Appendix B for examples of other organizations' lists and Appendix C for a prototype for wildland fire).

Leadership Development in the U.S. Marine Corps

The Leadership Task Group visit to the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, VA, was an intensive one-day event that was extremely well orchestrated by the Marine Corps. Lt. Col. Carlson, Director of Operations, Marine Corps University, was our host for the entire day. The main highlights of the visit were visits to (and discussions with the staffs of) the Staff NCO Academy, Officer Candidate School (including the Leadership Reaction Course), and The Basic School. The visit was fascinating and worthwhile from several different perspectives. There appear to be a number of training methods and techniques that could be adapted virtually verbatim and used in wildland fire training, both in leadership development and in non-leadership training.

How the Marine Corps Builds Leaders: NCO's

Perhaps the first thing that leaps out at you when benchmarking military organizations is their sheer size. The U.S. Marine Corps has approximately 172,000 active duty members. This is far larger than all of the federal and state wildland fire management agencies combined. In order to deliver effective training to such a large group of people, an organization must be focused and organized.

During our visit, the staff at Marine Corps University outlined their "cradle to grave", building block system of professional military education. In the ranks of non-commissioned officers (NCO's), this is visually represented as an inverted pyramid, with the least training and knowledge in the ranks of privates, slightly more at private first class, more at corporal, and so on up to the level of Sergeant Major/Master Gunnery Sergeant. The Marines use a combination of "Professional Self Study", traditional classroom training, and something called the "Professional Reading Program" to educate their NCO's.

There are three formal classroom courses for NCO's. In the Sergeant's Course, 7 days out of a total of 33 days of the curriculum are devoted to leadership training. At the next level is the "Career Course", aimed at Staff Sergeants. The message in the title of this course is that if you have arrived at this level, the Marine Corps could be a career for you. At lower ranks, the philosophy is "move up or move out". In the Career Course, 12 days out of a total of 37 days are devoted to leadership training. The third formal course in Marine Corps NCO development is called the Advanced Course, designed for Gunnery Sergeants. In this course, 10 days out of a total of 37 days are devoted to leadership training.

One thing the Marine Corps has that the wildland fire community does not is a good idea of the demographics of the participants in their various courses. This information is useful both in designing courses and in analyzing the training a work force receives at various stages. For example, the USMC student profile for the Advanced course shows that the average age of students is 34, average time in service is 14 years, average time in grade is 2 years. In other words, by the time a Marine NCO completes this course, on average he or she will have received 29 days of leadership training in the context of formal classroom courses, in 14 years of service. In wildland fire, we possess very little information regarding the demographics of attendees of our courses, which limits our ability to analyze and reach conclusions based on who gets what, when.

The impact of the Professional Self Study and Professional Reading Programs on the development of Marines should not be underestimated. Although neither of these programs occurs in a traditional classroom setting, both appear to contribute greatly to learning. Both programs are used for both NCO's and officers.

It's interesting to note some of the content of the Marine NCO leadership courses. While some of it is very military-specific, some of it would translate well into the world of wildland fire. For example, "effective written communication" is a component of all three NCO classroom leadership courses. When asked how written communication is a leadership skill, the Marines responded that leadership can be effected through any type

of communication, written or verbal. Given that written communication skills are a part of the required Knowledges, Skills and Abilities for many jobs in wildland fire, it would behoove the wildland fire agencies to think long and hard on this subject. It is widely recognized that our higher education system provides us with many people woefully unprepared to exercise even minimal writing skills.

Counseling and performance evaluation are also covered in all three NCO leadership courses. In existing wildland fire courses, counseling is almost never covered and performance evaluation is handled in a cursory fashion (i.e., show students the form). Yet dealing with subordinates effectively is one of the keys to leadership!

Guided discussions and guest lectures are used in all of the Marine NCO leadership courses. As NCO's progress upward on their career development track, they are given instruction on training program management, instructional techniques and career planning.

How the Marine Corps Builds Leaders: Officers

The development of officers in the Marine Corps is structured differently than that of NCO's. Marine Corps officers either come from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis or they come through the Marine Officer Candidates School (OCS). The mission of the Marine OCS is "to TRAIN, EVALUATE, and SCREEN officer candidates to ensure that they possess the moral, intellectual, and physical qualities for commissioning and the LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL to serve successfully as company grade officers in the Fleet Marine Force." The OCS motto is "Ductus Exemplo": Leadership by Example.

Evaluation and screening of officer candidates occurs "in an atmosphere characterized by chaos, uncertainty and stress" (sounds just like being on a fire!). Candidates are evaluated on Leadership (50%), Academic ability (25%), and Physical Fitness (25%). This is a fair indicator of the importance the Marine Corps places on leadership ability in its officers.

One interesting facet of the evaluation of officer candidates is that much of it is conducted by NCO's. As the Marine Corps puts it, as an officer candidate you are "evaluated by those who lead" (e.g., officers) "and those you will lead" (e.g., NCO's). The idea that you have to prove your leadership ability to the satisfaction of those you will lead, before you are allowed to lead, is quite intriguing. Perhaps the employment of some permutation of this concept in wildland fire would lead to fewer leadership problems in the field.

Another interesting tool that the Marine Corps uses at its Officer Candidates School is the "Leadership Reaction Course" (LRC). This is an outdoor facility which is basically a set of walled "bays" approximately 20'x30' in size. Each bay contains a unique problem to be solved, such as: get an ammo container across a body of water using only a wooden plank and a piece of rope (without throwing the container). Students have never encountered these specific "problems" before. They are divided into small groups, the leader is selected and briefed on the problem, then the group has 10 minutes to solve the problem. Students are not evaluated on whether or not their group solves the problem;

in fact, only around 10% actually do solve it. Instead, the active display of leadership qualities is what is evaluated. As the Corps puts it, "a candidate's thought process and ability to maximize the potential of his fireteam is more important than the actual completion of the problem."

There are a number of somewhat similar "team-building, problem-solving" type exercises and programs offered in the private sector (e.g., raft a whitewater river with your team). The Marine Corps approach is appealing because of its simplicity and transportability and because it allows an objective evaluation of demonstrated leadership ability. It would not be difficult to develop a Leadership Reaction Course for the purpose of evaluating potential leaders in wildland fire.

Perhaps the most interesting thing that we saw during our visit was the University concept itself as applied by the Marine Corps. At The Basic School (where Marine officers go upon completion of Officer Candidate School), classes of approximately 250 Marine Lieutenants are taught by a cadre of Captains. Rarely is it the case that one instructor addresses a class of 250 students: more often, the class is broken down into much smaller increments for effective learning. The Captain-instructors either apply or are assigned to The Basic School from throughout the Marine Corps, for 3-year stints. Captains are not allowed to instruct a course until they have "apprenticed" under an existing instructor and completed an "Instructor Education Program". There is also an ongoing "Faculty Development Program". In contrast, our wildland fire instructors are only required to take a 36-hour "facilitative instructor" course before being allowed to instruct. One of the key benefits that the Marine Corps realizes from their system is the education of the Captains. The Captains teach the Lieutenants, but in the process learn a great deal themselves which is invaluable to the organization, especially when the Captains return to the field and apply what they've learned.

Another significant process used by the Marine Corps is that each new Captain who arrives at The Basic School to be an instructor has a one-on-one conference with the commander. This personal attention by the most senior leader not only emphasizes the importance that the organization places on learning, it also serves to "raise the bar" for the instructors in terms of what is expected of them. We have no parallel for this practice in any of our agencies.

Decision Making Training for Marine Officers

Making good, timely decisions amid chaos and uncertainty is a valued skill in the Marine Corps. At The Basic School at Quantico, a number of different philosophies and techniques are employed to help Marines develop their decision making skills. Decision making is injected into almost all instruction to encourage a process of "immersion and discovery". Students are given as much responsibility as possible. Students are taught counseling skills and how to develop subordinate leaders, in addition to the philosophy of leadership and core values. Classroom instruction on decision making involves few lectures. As much instruction as possible is moved out of the classroom, and tactical decision making games are used extensively.

One educational tool that the Marine Corps is making great use of is the "sand table". The tool itself is just what the title implies: a box or table filled with sand, about 8'x10' in size. Sand is used because it can easily be re-shaped to form different types of "terrain" features. The Marines use sand tables to perform "Tactical Decision Games" or TDG's; they even have a publication called "Designing TDG's" that helps instructors create their own. The concept is this: a student is presented with a scenario that could be a historical situation or one that has been made up. For example, your platoon is at the base of this hill, you are taking fire from that ridge, your objective is to take the hill, now what do you do.

The student works through the problem in the presence of a number of his or her peers, adding to the stress of the situation. Sound decision making under stress is a highly prized leadership skill in the Marine Corps, just as it is in the ranks of wildland firefighters. The student not only has to explain his or her decisions but also has to convey orders just as they would be conveyed in a real situation. In other words, it isn't enough to just say "we'd go around to the right and take the hill", you have to say what specific instructions would be given to subordinates and when. The use of TDG's to simulate real situations and give students opportunities to practice this type of decision making and communication is a training method that the wildland fire community could easily employ. In the not-too-distant past, sand tables were used in wildland fire training but they are seldom used today. The fact that the Marine Corps favors the use of this low tech tool says a lot: the Corps has access to some of the most sophisticated computer simulation tools currently available, yet they choose to use boxes full of sand to practice and evaluate leadership skills.

In terms of decision making theory, the Marine Corps teaches their young officers the difference between analytical and recognition decision making. Through consultations with experts in the field, such as Dr. Gary Klein, the Marine Corps has come to believe that recognition decision making is the most useful type of decision making for chaotic, rapidly changing situations. These types of theories should be explained to wildland firefighters and they need to be allowed to practice them in a training environment.

Immersion and Discovery as Learning Methods

The Marine Corps has made use of some of the finest academic minds available to develop its instructional techniques. For leadership and decision making training, formal lectures are used infrequently. Based on experience, the Marine Corps feels the "crawl, walk, run" (or tell, show, do) method of learning is not the best. Their desire is to put the student in the environment in order to expose him to conditions he can expect in the "real world". Another term for immersion is "sink or swim": students are placed in realistic, stressful situations and given the opportunity to fail, prior to receiving any formal instruction. This gives the student a better appreciation for the techniques and procedures that are taught later. This is the essence of the concept of immersion.

In terms of the process of discovery, the Marines feel that students are sometimes the best instructors. The role of the instructor becomes one not of "teaching", but more one of facilitating learning. Instructors are not expected to somehow "know" how to instruct; they go through an organized Instructor Education Program. Wildland fire organizations

need to take a look at this model and determine if it would be useful for our instructors as opposed to the current approach of requiring Facilitative Instructor and calling it good.

Continuous Learning in the Marine Corps

The Marine Corps has a solid belief that its members can learn a great deal by studying the history of the organization, which dates back to 1775. Study of battles prior to 1775 occurs frequently as well. Reading is strongly encouraged, with one Marine Corps publication entitled "The Book on Books". This is basically a listing of hundreds of pertinent books with short descriptions of their theme and content. For many courses, the reading of certain books is a prerequisite. The first thing participants do in class is to discuss the books they've read; it quickly becomes apparent who has completed the reading. To quote the "Book on Books": "the main thing to remember is that the professional reading program is not a check-in-the-box exercise. It is an exercise in learning!"

Listen to the Marine Corps philosophy on reading, as written in the "Book on Books": "there is nothing that Marines are discouraged from reading." "The probability of a Marine being an expert on war without reading is slim." "History gives you an appreciation for the realities of your profession which is essential." Any of these concepts readily translates to the world of wildland firefighting.

Another technique used in many Marine Corps courses is that students either select or are assigned a topic to research and write a report on. This has a three-fold benefit: it forces students to study some element(s) of the subject at hand in great depth; it hones writing skills; it helps sharpen presentation and public speaking skills when students present their conclusions to their peers.

The implications for fire training are obvious: we could have our own "Book on Books", a list of "selected readings" (books, accident investigation reports, news articles, etc.) from our own rich history. We could use the "research topics" approach in a number of courses to foster in-depth analysis of issues, stimulate discussion and sharpen our employees' writing and presentation skills.

The Marine Corps has established itself as a learning organization. We could realize huge gains in educating wildland firefighters if we could instill in our work force the value of reading books and learning from history, the commitment to continuing education. While many people in our work force already possess these values, our organizations could do more to encourage learning and to develop tools to facilitate learning from history or teaching others appropriately.

Perhaps it is time for the wildland fire agencies to consider a "cradle-to-grave" University approach to wildland fire training, using some of the educational concepts employed by the Marine Corps. At the present time, training delivery in wildland fire agencies is quite fragmented. Some agencies are using an apprenticeship program at the "entry level", while many others are not. Even for agencies using an apprenticeship program, there is a large gap in organized training delivery between that level and the NARTC level.

Leadership Development in the Corporate World

The biggest challenge for benchmarking leadership development practices in the corporate world is the variation that exists. This variation is driven by the wide range of internal cultures and frequent management doctrine changes that follow senior executive transitions. However, some basic guidance can be derived from a 1998 study conducted by Linkage, Inc., a training firm and Warren Bennis, a leading author in the field of leadership development. In this study more than 350 companies were surveyed. One of the key findings of the study was nearly all companies that identified employee leadership skills as critical to their success had integrated leadership development systems in place. This supports the concept that the effective leadership development systems should be adapted to the unique culture of the target organization. For these reasons, we would suggest that the best use of benchmarking from private corporations lies in the techniques they utilize rather than their strategies for workforce implementation.

Some Ideas to Borrow

A second key finding of the Linkage, Inc. survey was that most successful leadership development systems included some or all of the following four components:

- A distinct leadership model comprised of core values, principles, or competencies that forms the basis for all evaluation processes and provides a framework for all components of the program.
- 360-degree assessments using multiple raters (subordinates, peers, superiors) to measure critical leadership skill areas and give feedback to participants regarding their strengths and weaknesses in those areas.
- Action learning through simulation so that participants engage in real world leadership challenges that relate to their work environment.
- Significant involvement of senior level management as advocates for change, as faculty in formal training courses, as raters in the 360-degree assessments, and as mentors.

Respondents to the survey identified these techniques as superior to the traditional methods of accelerated promotions, executive graduate study programs, and sporadic conferences.

A third important finding from this survey had to do with design factors that contributed to successful programs. In addition to the involvement of senior management as previously mentioned, the most important factors cited included:

- Doing a thorough needs assessment.
- Linking leadership development into a strategic plan.
- Leveraging internal expertise with professional design assistance.

- Piloting programs before launching.
- Using "best performers" as faculty.
- Continuous evaluation.

Some Differences to Note

The primary target audience for many company leadership development systems is mid-level managers and high-level executives. In other words, field level employees must gain access to this target audience through a survival of fittest process, if they gain access at all. The underlying philosophy of this approach is the desire to focus limited training resources on the perceived "highest potential" employees. Consequently many entry-level employees are not afforded leadership development opportunities when they are at the most teachable point of their career. For example, Abbott Labs, a company with 57,000 employees, was one of the companies identified in the Linkage, Inc. survey as having a "best practices" leadership development system. It is a two-tiered program. The first tier is targeted at the senior manager level and runs 140 participants a year through the program. The second tier is at the functional vice president level and has 35 participants a year. Another "best practices" example of a leadership development program was BP Amoco, a company with 85,000 employees. Their program focus is only on the individuals that are viewed to have the potential to achieve the top 120 posts in the company.

Much of the "leadership training" that is made available to the field level employees of corporations involves basic supervision skills or emphasis on personal insight in order to alter individual styles and behaviors in the workplace. These are usually generic offerings delivered to employees from many different companies with no specific links to the environments that the participants work in. Also, these courses are offered sporadically and usually are not part of a systematic delivery approach. This type of training does not adhere to the principles of "train as you fight" and "train as a unit."

What About Field Level Leadership?

Back to the question of benchmarking corporate leadership development strategies for workforce implementation. . .does the wildland fire leadership environment more closely parallel a military environment or a corporate environment? If we accept the premise that leadership is about providing positive motivation and unified direction to a workforce, then we must examine the consequences and challenges that wildland firefighters face at the field level. Even the lowest level leaders on the fireline are routinely put into situations that have life/safety consequences and rapid intuitive decision making demands. From this perspective, the wildland fire leadership environment is significantly different from the corporate environment at the field level. This contrast becomes less distinct at the upper management level. In the corporate environment, consequences at the lowest levels are borne by the "company" as profit and production related risk. The decision making process is generally consensus oriented with the analytical model being the rule. Field level employees will provide input to this process

but are rarely put in a position to make rapid decisions about life threatening situations or make independent decisions involving large financial commitments.

National Fire Academy

The National Fire Academy (NFA), based in Emmitsburg, Maryland, is an organization under FEMA with the following purpose "...to advance the professional development of fire service personnel. . ." The NFA primarily serves the structural firefighting community.

The Management Science Program at NFA contains a number of course offerings related to leadership, supervision and management. Some of these courses contain very distinct leadership content, such as ethics, leadership styles, coaching and motivating, identifying and reducing stress, group dynamics and team effectiveness.

There is no sequencing in the National Fire Academy's curriculum. In other words, a person is not required to be in a certain position to take a certain course (with a few exceptions). Instead, the courses focus on the skill sets or competencies that are needed to perform as a supervisor in the fire service. If a person is a supervisor, they can take any supervision course they need, depending on their own self-assessment. Most of NFA's supervision and management offerings are primarily targeted at the chief officer, company officer or battalion chief level, however.

One offering is called "Fire Service Supervision: Self-Study", which covers some of the basic principles and attitudes on stress management, time management, counseling, conflict resolution and group dynamics. This course is available as a download from the NFA web site (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/>). This course should be examined by the wildland fire training community, as its content is probably applicable to many people in our profession.

One big difference between the structural fire profession and that of wildland fire is that there is no 310-1 for structural fire. Although the NFPA has professional qualification standards, none of the courses at the NFA are requirements for advancement; people go there to take classes because they believe they will gain knowledge that will help them perform their jobs, not because a document says they have to.

Some of the supervision, management and leadership courses presented by NFA appear to offer content that would be of use to the more senior levels of the wildland fire organization (local unit Fire Management Officer and above). Wildland fire training staff need to become more familiar with the NFA curriculum in order to make specific recommendations for attendance.

National Conservation Training Center

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV, has an extensive list of course offerings dealing with supervision and leadership. These offerings are keyed to the Office of Personnel Management's 27 leadership competencies, much the same way that BLM's leadership training is designed.

Courses range from "Supervision: Is It For You" to "Leadership Through Influence". Some courses focus on supervisory roles and responsibilities, some focus on career coaching and

development, some on identifying behavioral types and effective communication. Assessment tools are also available, from a 360-degree assessment tool (the Leadership Effectiveness Inventory) to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

Courses at NCTC are designed for all people in supervisory positions and are not targeted at emergency management personnel. Analytical decision making skills seem to be emphasized as opposed to recognition-primed decision making. Many of the courses appear to offer valuable material that would be useful to most supervisors, however these types of courses appear to fit into the "first 40 supervisory training" niche identified by most agencies. None of the courses are directly tied to leadership in a high risk work environment where good decision making under stress is essential and where poor leadership decisions can lead to increased threats to life and property.

ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

This analysis was conducted using the **SWOT** process to evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Status Quo

This alternative consists of leaving the curriculum and the 310-1 basically unchanged. Course revision would be accomplished as planned for existing courses.

Strengths:

- Courses already exist. Requirements are identified in the 310-1 that specify currently available courses.
- Provides some of the content needed by our work force as well as some of the tools.
- Cadres are already established, consisting of agency employees.
- There would not be additional training needs generated by totally new courses (no requirement to re-take courses that are simply revisions of older courses).

Weaknesses:

- Only addresses a few of the identified problems with the existing curriculum (see section titled "Fundamental flaws in the current curriculum").
- Problems that could be addressed with course revision are limited to: not specific to leadership, content w/no application, duplication of required agency training, no method for testing, linkage with different level courses.

- Complete redesign of courses will be necessary, not just a simple revision.
- Current course revision model requires in-house (agency employee) SME's, which really don't exist for development.

Opportunities:

- Individual entities can develop their own custom curricula for leadership under this system (don't have to compete with an identified, required curriculum).
- Could obtain authority to substitute existing NWCG courses for agency supervisory training requirements, or obtain waivers.
- Courses could be revised under existing NWCG course revision schedule (S-281, S-381).
- Recent knowledge can be incorporated into course revisions.

Threats:

- Agencies have identified a gap in leadership skills as an ongoing problem. This gap exists in spite of existing curricula.
- Courses are put on to meet a requirement rather than to provide a tangible benefit to individuals and agencies.
- Custom courses that are developed will not be standardized; there will be a wide range of delivery methods used (implying variations in quality).
- Use of agency personnel for course cadre may be a threat due to experienced people's existing and expanding workloads (i.e., they may not be available when needed).
- If courses are not required, all people in key leadership positions will not have benefited from leadership training.
- NWCG development staff may not be available to revise courses in a timely manner.

Separate Leadership Curriculum

This alternative consists of the development of a connected set of courses that focus specifically on leadership; there would be a logical and position-specific progression through these courses as people develop in their careers. Courses would have a unique designator, such as L- rather than S-, to allow them to be easily distinguished from technical skills courses.

Strengths:

- Could solve all of the identified problems with the existing curriculum.
- If training is required, it would be a strength because everyone would be getting the same concepts presented in a standardized fashion.
- Leadership training, if separated from other training (e.g., ICS position-oriented skills training) would facilitate the recognition of leadership as a discrete and necessary discipline and field of study.

Weaknesses:

- Making leadership courses required might be unpalatable to some interagency cooperators who typically resist adding more required courses.
- There could be a bigger course development workload (and associated costs), than there would be for simple revisions to existing courses.
- Could take a lot of time and money to create new courses.

Opportunities:

- Create a new methodology for course development and revision that allows for ongoing development/revision as needed, rather than on a fixed time frame (e.g., once every 5 years).
- Can use existing, non-NWCG courses such as in-house, military or vendor training products.
- Ability to build curriculum from the ground up by adding complexity and content to what is initially presented to firefighters.
- Could help answer the need for the large number of leaders we are going to need in the near future.
- May help agencies address identified leadership competencies.

Threats:

- Could result in over-reliance on private vendors to produce and deliver leadership training. This could drive up costs or, in a worst case, result in non-delivery of products within prescribed time frames.
- Could meet with resistance to the overall concept of a leadership curriculum from some NWCG member agencies.

Provide Resource List of Outsourced Courses/Reading Materials

This alternative consists of simply using what is already available in the private sector. Training would not be fire or emergency operations-specific, but could be more corporate-oriented. Existing NWCG "leadership" courses would be eliminated.

Strengths:

- No development workload or costs for agencies.
- Would expose agency employees to other work environments and ways of thinking/dealing with leadership problems/issues.
- Would have access to professional instructors and leadership SME's.
- Courses are available to anyone who can pay the fee.

Weaknesses:

- Courses may not be tailored to the fireline or any other type of high-risk environment.
- Could cost a lot of money per student.
- There are currently no standard criteria for evaluating private-sector leadership courses for applicability to our work force; someone would have to do this work, which could be very labor-intensive.
- It would be difficult or impossible to establish requirements for leadership training that are tied to specific courses for specific levels of the organization.

Opportunities:

- Look at other organization approaches to leadership development.

Threats:

- Could spend a lot of time and effort on this and determine that we need our own leadership curriculum.
- Could result in non-involvement of upper level agency leaders in leadership development process.

- Could result in heavy reliance on special delivery vendors who are subject to market forces (i.e., bankruptcy etc.).
- There might be a reluctance to invest in entry-level personnel who arguably may be the most in need of getting leadership concepts; also, most courses in the private sector are not geared to the "follower" level.

Other Possible Alternatives

Embedding leadership modules in existing courses. This approach would be quite labor intensive, subject to a great deal of duplication, and would take about 10 years to implement given the current NWCG course revision schedule.

Cadres could be structured so that people from different occupations (i.e., Operations, Logistics) are there to relate how leadership issues are dealt with in their specific occupation. This could occur in any of the above alternatives.